While Sa'd was in Sharaf, he received ‘Umar's letter, expressing an opinion similar to that of al-Muthanna. At the same time ‘Umar wrote also to Abu ‘Ubaydah (b. al-Jarrah), and the letters were transmitted to both of them. In the letter to Abu ‘Ubaydah, ‘Umar ordered him to send six thousand Iraqis and all those who desired to go with them [to join Sa'd's army]. The text of his letter to Sa'd was as follows: After the preliminaries [amma bacdu ): Set out from Sharaf in the direction of Persia, together with all the Muslims who are with you. Put your reliance in God and seek His help in all your affairs. Concerning the task in front of you, be aware that you are about to take on a nation that has great numbers and superior equipment. Their courage is great, and they live in a well-defended country. Though it is flat, it is hard of access because of its crevices, flood plains, and torrents,except if you happen to arrive when the water is low. When you encounter the Persians or one of them, attack them first, and beware of waiting until their armies gather. Let them not deceive you, because they are deceitful and

crafty, unlike you; you must exert full effort in the struggle against them.